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THE END OF ART.

It has been remarked, that there is less misery in America than in any other country, and less happiness. We have undeveloped natural resources; and we, the people, are eager in pursuit of immediate ends; building up fortunes, reputations, and social connections, planting orchards with care and pains, and only hoping by-and-by to enjoy the fruit. We have not reached that point in culture, where a man recovers equilibrium after his first hot career of experiment, and turns from too earnest solicitude for his future, to take the good of life which lies in the present tense. There is a lack of liberal aims and of the cheerfulness which accompanies them. The enterprises of my neighbors have no wide prospect, no far-reaching expectation, like that of a man who serves the eternal Beauty and Beneficence. But criticism does not help us. He only is a benefactor who can lead in the way of enduring pleasures, who is able to detect the bright elements in our condition, who is full of resource, and knows how to weave golden threads into the warp of Fate. We wait for one who has found a spring in the meadow to put aside the rushes and the grass, and open a level path for our desire. So much pure joy as there is in a man, so much life is in him, so much power. The Art influence is properly all joy. Art is a record of that emotion with which, through the mediation of forms, we encounter the creative spirit, whose loveliness is poured abroad through all creatures, saturates the spheres and reaches to thrill the heart of man. Beauty is the sunshine of the soul. Poetry and music, painting and sculpture, are rays which strike through us from the source of that splendor. But we must not forget the heat that is in the sunshine, and is better than its brightness. The end of Art is not Beauty alone, but life, to which Beauty leads and introduces us, because she is a part of the life from which our own being is derived.

The people are indifferent to Art, because our doctrine has not been simple and sincere. We have allowed the means of the artist to be confounded with his ends. Methods and materials, and details, are only posts of an open door through which we are invited to enter to deeper human consciousness.

Our theories of Art and Religion are material; they do not offer much, and therefore do not exercise powerful attraction. The preachers promise only safety, a mere escape, and do not seek to kindle in their hearers an immediate divine experience. They ought to bring heaven in their hands. So the servants of Beauty should not be content to rank with showmen and tavern-keepers, as peddlers of novelty, or tapsters of the small beer of amusement. They should sustain us in asserting that Art offers the bread and meat of immortality. They should give us the example of an eye fixed on the permanent, and regardless of shows. For all their power comes from admission to that which wears the world of forms, as a mantle, and is not wrapped as a mantle around forms. Though every

artist and every example should fail us, we must still declare that the pleasure which flows to us from Nature, and is distilled and offered us again by the Master in a cup which we can lift and carry securely to the lips, is not a momentary refreshment, but a drop out of the ocean which has no shore. The influence which seeks us through the landscape, and those shining figures which light it better than the sun, is that life for which we have gone hungering and thirsting so many days, and which we must find before we can begin to work or to worship. Art is a fountain of manhood to man, and of womanhood to woman.

The author of "John Halifax" has given her testimony in this description of Millais' picture of the Huguenot. "I never saw that look on any living face save John's; but I have seen it once in a picture of two Huguenot lovers. The woman is trying to fasten round the man's neck the white badge that will save him from the massacre (of St. Bartholomew), he clasping her the while, gently puts it aside—not stern—but smiling. That quiet, tender smile, firmer than any frown, will, you feel sure, soon control the woman's anguish, so that she will sob out—any faithful woman would—'Go, die! Dearer to me than even thyself are thy honor and thy duty!'" Let us thank this brave woman, and call on the doctors to declare that poetry, and painting, and music, and sculpture are not the fruit of a mere longing after something good and fair, but are an overflowing of hearts flooded with the presence of perfection. The Art impulse is a rapture and intoxication. Inspired men easily see that there is no need of our care and fret of our getting and spending, that if we should elect to take the good of our human, and not of our animal nature, we might not be so well housed, and fed, and feathered, but we should easily fill the day with fair relations, cheerful tasks, and glad anticipation. The ideal is the proper home of man. Rising to stand in it, he subdues the actual, and makes it a servant of thought and affection. We cannot interest ourselves in anything limited, for the soul is impatient of checks and barriers, and demands a prospect of boundless activity and growing satisfaction. The actual is a wall before our faces; but the ideal life, like the sky overhead, is open to depths unfathomable. Order, and Beauty, and Beneficence, will not be measured or exhausted, and their service is always entered by following the lead of an irresistible attraction; not by struggling, but by obedience to the gravitation of the soul.

True beauty is an element which enters to uplift us, as the birds are lifted by air in their bones and bodies, to float in the ocean of air. That which conducts us towards our destiny is always something admired with all admiration, something supremely fair, so that our seeking it is devotion to the best.

Art is a representation not of what the eyes see, but of what the soul seeks, and as poetry submitteth the "shows of things to the desires of the mind," so Art employs the

shows of things to express our readiness for noble companionship, our love of purity, and dignity, and sacrifice.

Beauty suffers neglect from us as Truth does, because we do not see what it promises and prepares. We do not recognize the Forerunners of whom our poet sings—

"Long I followed happy guides,
I could never reach their sides.

* * * * *

Their near camp my spirit knows
By signs gracious as rainbows;
I thenceforward and long after
Listen for their harp-like laughter,
And carry in my heart for days
Peace that hallows rudest ways."

Our loves and likings, if they be pure, are to be valued not for themselves, but for that to which they deliver us. The beginning of culture is a cherishing of some deep delight. If a man will accept traditions and postpone his own pleasure and conviction, he may go on all his lifetime trying in vain to admire Raffaele and Angelo. But if he will put aside the authorities with simple honesty, and give heed to that beauty which calls to him by name; if he will cleave to that, and serve it while yet it is dear to himself alone, and not to fame; if he will reject all interference with his sincere preference, he will be led forward and find himself very soon sitting an intelligent disciple at the feet of the masters. For beauty flows and circulates in different degrees of purity, growing finer and more vital in ascension, like the other fluids of the sphere, first water, then air, then ether, and then the empyrean or element of incorruptible fire. And these degrees are the rounds of a ladder, and must be mounted in order without omission. Men are born into one or other of these elements. They must take the good of that by way of preparation for a finer, and admission to breathe the creative flame of the supreme heavens can come only from fidelity to the excellence which is near and palpable, whether it be of earth, of water, or of air.

The beginning of culture lies in finding out what we really and earnestly like, which, as Browning says,

"Takes pains to know."

We must face the crowd of imitators, and keep our own estimate unshaken, though the whole world go into ecstasies over putty and paint. The Art impulse is a desire to serve that perfection which shows so fair, and which we cherish not for what it shows in the world, but for what it is in the heavens. The sacredness of high beauty is felt by all who are open to that influence. They see from the first that it is a herald of all good. That Beauty is as the poet has named her: "The pilot of the young soul." But we cannot speak what we know of the value of Art, till we distinguish between her pleasures and those of the senses, and the understanding; the pleasures of mere activity and calculation. The unreflecting are pleased if

they can handle and measure a work. They ask how much the statue weighs, and what it cost, and wonder at the imitation of forms. They enjoy pictures only as they do the newspaper and the street.

These are the materialists in whom life is not yet the conscious morning of an endless day. These are the restless, aimless, vacant multitude, who have not learned how life differs from pastime, or the beguiling of empty hours with curiosity and cunning.

But if a man is touched by the finger of the Infinite he will know that he is not flattered or deceived by the promise of Beauty. The pleasures which we need to cultivate accredit themselves, and lift us to see their divine origin. That which leaves us in doubt of its celestial derivation will not move us deeply. Our joys must be like the flower to which a poet sang:

"No flames that crown, or wings that flow,
Authenticate their wearer so,
As thy smile thee. Mild angel sent
From love's all circling firmament."

Our culture is a yielding to the sweetest influences—Beauty finds so short and direct a road to the heart, that we seem to take it without an act of the understanding or the will. We labor to perfect our powers, but in the moment of vision our active faculties are struck into a kind of swoon, and the best experience is an influx, a pure and passive reception. So comes inevitable conviction, and so the celestial Venus, the guide whom we must follow. Her coming is always a surprise. She overtakes us in the pastures, or breaks on us in a chance word, or tone, or look, or gesture, or history, and we forget our poor activity, and become "the hermits of a dream." When the gods practise this enchantment on a man, they are careful to conceal their means. The secret of a great work can no more be apprehended by wit, than the mystery of night and morning can be caught in the trap of an astronomer, and carried away in figures and formulas.

The children of Beauty cannot tell you what Beauty is. She would not be divine if she could rightly be defined or described, but neither can they cease to trust and deliver themselves to her guidance. We are all to be led and not driven to our good. The happy and beloved testify together that they have been borne upon a wave, carried away upon a stream to their happiness. That stream is the deep nature and tendency of things. We have all some throbs of feeble ecstasy. The dullest clod of a man is sometimes thrilled into answering vibration by the harmonies of the universe. In moments, this beat of our own with the pulses which are revolutions of worlds and systems, assures us of the identity of human life with that which blossoms into suns and stars, and bears fruit in happy animals and helpful, hopeful men. This consciousness is the Art impulse. Its voice is the cry of the poet:

"I am a part of all that I behold.

The climbing ocean and unconquered shore,

Mountains that stoutly stand and skies that soar,
These are but young, or I myself am old."

We name this joy a communion with Nature, to mark our vague perception that one fire burns within and without the breast, that this drop so sweet upon the lips is vital, and hurries to swell the currents of the blood. Diffused and scattered here, but perfect somewhere, yonder our true being awaits us. Under its attraction our hearts are

"Like the Atlantic streams which run
When the South Sea calls."

Through some flower of the fields, or of the zodiac; through the face of morning, or of man this invitation is extended, and touches us. Suddenly the iron horizon of Fate is broken, and we look far on to the shining future of the soul. With reverence and gratitude we learn to accept our participation in the divine original, our share in the fortunes of the cause, and the effort to confirm this experience of immortality, is what we name a liberal culture, which regards not any definite end alone, but the gradual and constant reinforcement of our being from its source.

B. B.

PORTRAITURE.

By Rembrandt Peale.

"ONE reason," says Mrs. Jamieson, "why the daguerreotype portraits are in general so unsatisfactory, may be traced to a natural law, though I have not heard it suggested. It is this: every object which we behold we do not see with the eyes only, but with the soul; and this is especially true of the human countenance, which, in so far as it is the expression of mind, we see through the *medium* of our own individual mind. Thus a portrait is satisfactory in so far as the painter has *sympathy* with his subject; and delightful to us in proportion as the resemblance reflected thorough *his* sympathies, is in accordance with our *own*. Now, in the daguerreotype, there is no such medium, and the face comes before us without passing through the human mind and brain to our apprehension. This may be the reason why a daguerreotype, however beautiful and accurate, is seldom satisfactory or agreeable; and that while we acknowledge its truth as a fact, it always leaves something for the sympathies to desire."

This is a sample of the modern fashion of amateur writing on works of Art, which limits all excellence to mind, soul, sympathy, and ideality, and accords no merit to the most exact representations of natural objects, unless the theoretic and visionary spectator imagines he can discover something of his own notion of *mind* worked into it, or "*suggestively*" growing out of it. The intelligent human countenance certainly is, as it ought to be, the most interesting object to a sensitive human being; but it must be acknowledged that the pictures of *still life* of the Flemish school, as ingenious works of Art—"objects seen with the

eyes only"—though they may not excite our sympathies, which have passed through the "mind and brain" of the artist in the *medium* of paint, moulded by a patient hand under the guidance of a correct eye—have been admired for ages by artists and amateurs of the highest intellect. Indeed, the curious and true representation of most natural objects, and many artificial ones, are pleasing to the mere organ of sight by *form, color, light, and shade*, whether they have, or have not, any other connection of thought, sentiment, or expression, except the taste which is shown in their grouping, and the harmony of their coloring.

The daguerreotype Art is of inestimable value in many of its applications. Its wonderful power was first made known to us by a representation of the graceful intricacies of one of the Gothic windows of Notre Dame, which was produced by Mr. Daguerre in twenty minutes. Now only a few seconds would be required to accomplish what the most expert draughtsman would find it difficult to execute in many days. For architectural, and other inanimate objects, nothing can be imagined more perfect. In the exploring expedition of Lewis and Clark, no individual of his party had the least knowledge of drawing; and all the illustrations which embellish the history of that expedition, were engraved from designs made by my father from the skins of animals which he first had to put into their natural forms; and an interesting cataract was drawn entirely from a verbal description. Now the traveller, without any knowledge of drawing, is able to give us correct representations of every object he may deem worthy of notice.

In the *Home Journal* it is said that "Daguerreotype has killed miniature painting, and superseded portrait painting. The great majority of those who would otherwise be the patrons of portraiture, are now content with likenesses that are truer, cheaper, and quicker done."

It has certainly killed *bad* miniature painting; but cannot supersede portrait painting, though it may, in a certain degree, interfere with its encouragement. Its pictures may be *true*, as regards the proportions of the features; but they are seldom true in the requisite gradations and rounding of the shadows; but sometimes they are more true in recording the strong marks of age and some fixed expression, than is agreeable to the person represented, and which an accomplished artist would soften down *agreeably* to represent the character of the individual. Their cheapness is a general advantage, which, by degrees, will widely spread a taste for portraiture, which will ultimately profit by the innovation; for even now it has become necessary for the portrait painter to make his portraits not only *as true*, but expressively *more true* than the daguerreotypes, with which but few, at present, are "content."

As a substitute for portrait painting, the fashion of its employment is quite illusory. It is true that in many instances it furnishes the *memento* of a relative or friend